

ment of the government is bound by the most solemn sanctions to regulate its proceedings. To that constitution, therefore, the committee have recurred, with an anxious desire to discern its spirit, and to submit to its guidance. The conclusions to which it has led them they respectfully present to the consideration of the house.

The object of the chancellor's memorial is, to make known to the general assembly, that for the discharge of the duties of his office during the past year, he has received no compensation; and to claim payment of the same salary for the last year, which had been allowed to his predecessors, through a long course of years, without intermission, and which the memorialist considers himself constitutionally entitled to receive. He also prays for some legislative enactment which will guard against a recurrence of a state of things similar to that which existed during the year that has just expired.

That the highest and most important judicial officer of Maryland should be constrained to prefer a complaint like this, is a circumstance deeply to be deplored; and a thorough investigation of its justice is due, not merely to the individual concerned, but to the dignity and honour of the state. For the purpose of affording some aid to the deliberations of the house, the committee would ask permission to submit a brief historical sketch, which comprehends, they believe, most of the facts in relation to this interesting subject, to which it will be necessary to advert.

In the long list of ills inflicted by the government of Great Britain on the American people, there was none, perhaps, more grievous than the servile dependence of the judges, by whom the laws were administered. It forms a prominent theme in all the remonstrances which were adopted against the tyrannical acts of the parent state, and tended as much probably, as any other cause, to impress the minds of the reflecting portion of our countrymen with the necessity of shaking off our colonial bondage. We accordingly find a deep solicitude evinced by the framers of the greater part of the American constitutions, to guard against similar evils, and to establish on firm and deep foundations the independence of the judiciary. With this view the 30th article of the declaration of rights was incorporated in the constitution of Maryland; and one of its most important and efficient provisions is that which declares, that "salaries liberal, but not profuse, ought to be secured to the chancellor and the judges, during the continuance of their commissions." At an early period after the formation of the government, the general assembly evinced very strong anxiety to yield obedience to this injunction of the constitution; but the dark and troubled aspect of the times, together with the heavy expenses and overwhelming sacrifices which our struggle for existence continually required, rendered it in the first instance impracticable to do so. To have attempted indeed to establish regular permanent salaries in the deranged condition to which our finances were then reduced, and in the depreciated and unsettled state of our currency, would have been obviously nugatory. The